

U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr
August 26, 1943 – April 24, 2013

Surrounded by family and friends, the Honorable Richard E. Dorr of Springfield passed away on April 24, 2013 at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.



Judge Dorr was born in Jefferson City, Missouri, and he grew up working in his family's neighborhood market and thrilling local football fans. He attended the University of Illinois on a football scholarship and played in the 1964 Rose Bowl. After earning his undergraduate degree in 1965, Judge Dorr married his sweetheart Barbie Wilson and then began law school at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Graduating from law school in 1968, Judge Dorr worked briefly as an Assistant Attorney General for the state of Missouri and then entered active duty as a Judge Advocate in the United States Air Force. He served on active duty until 1973 and then in the U.S.A.F. Reserve until his retirement in 1990.

Judge Dorr began a distinguished private law practice in 1973 with the Springfield firm of Mann, Walter, Burkart, Weathers and Walter. He would later practice as a partner with Harrison, Tucker and Dorr and then the firm of Dorr, Baird and Lightner. In 1996, he joined Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin (now Husch Blackwell) and took on the challenge of managing the firm's Springfield office.

Throughout his thirty-four years of private law practice, Dick Dorr served his clients with integrity, professionalism and unmatched preparedness. He earned the respect of adversaries in the courtroom and the admiration of his colleagues back in the office. Dick was known for his hard work and high standards, and he exemplified all of the best things about the legal profession he loved.

Nominated by President George W. Bush to serve on the federal bench, Dick was confirmed by the Senate as a judge for the United States Court for the Western District of Missouri on August 1, 2002. As a federal judge, he demonstrated the same work ethic and legal acumen that characterized his law practice, treating all with respect and moving his heavy docket in a brisk and orderly manner. When asked about his success, he was always quick to credit his extraordinary chambers staff, Kerry Schroeppel, Karen Siegert and Jeannine Rankin. He considered them his extended family and was forever proud of his many outstanding law clerks.

Although he was committed to the serious work of administering justice, Judge Dorr always shared his quick wit and sense of humor with friends and colleagues, and he took great pleasure in simple things like playing with the family dog, talking politics or trying out new restaurants when visiting Kansas City. When not on the bench, Dick celebrated life with vigor and enthusiasm. Maintaining his athlete's physique and commitment to fitness, he enjoyed golf and was an avid hunter, fisherman and Nascar fan. However, the Judge always considered himself a homebody, declaring that spending time at home with wife Barbie and Sadie was "as good as it gets."

Dick Dorr was a leader in every facet of his life and was strong for others even as he fought his battle with cancer. His life was marked by his love for family and friends and by his dedicated service to his country and his community. A man of honor and conviction, he will be deeply missed by all those whose lives he touched.

Judge Dorr was preceded in death by his parents, Robert Ellis Dorr and Blanche Evelyn Dorr, by his sister Bonni Dorr, by his nephew Bob Dorr and by Aunt Mil. Judge Dorr is survived by his wife of forty-seven years, Barbie, son Scott and his wife Tracy, grandchildren Kaleah, Elijah and Jordan, brother Robert Dorr and his wife Barbara, and their children Tom and Dan Dorr, and his beloved West Highland Terrier, Sadie.

A memorial service with military honors will be held on May 7, 2013 at Drury University's Clara Thompson Hall at 2:00pm. All are welcome. Memorial donations may be made to the Richard E. Dorr Scholarship Fund to benefit a deserving student planning to attend law school. Contributions to the Fund may be sent to Central Trust and Investment Company, 3333 South National, Springfield, Missouri 65807. Online condolences may be made care of Gorman-Scharpf Funeral Home, www.gormanscharpf.com.